

MONSTRESS™



MARJORIE LIU ISSUE 11



SANA TAKEDA

THE MONSTRESS STORY SO FAR...

With the help of the bone key her late mother left behind, Maika and her companions, Kippa and Master Ren, made their way through dangerous, ghost-haunted waters in search of an explanation for the presence of the terrible Monstrum living inside Maika's body. After negotiating with the skeletal Ferryman and fighting off a horde of angry sirens, they finally reached the shore of the Isle of Bones — an island they soon realized was formed by the bones of a dead Monstrum.

While Maika remained laser-focused on her quest, Ren grew suspicious and picked up an abandoned skull, hoping to use his nekromancy on it to draw out the island's secrets. Kippa, meanwhile, sensed an even greater danger: a powerful fox Ancient, bound by chains, at the center of the island's horrors. Now, they find themselves face-to-face with that Ancient, who claims to have once met with Maika's mother — and speaks ominously of prophecies fulfilled.

THE PLAYERS...



MAIKA An Arcanic teen who survived the Great War, and slavery at the hands of the Cumaeen witch nuns. Ruthless and haunted, she is determined to uncover the truth behind her mother's murder — and her mother's secrets — in the hope that she can free herself from an ancient and dangerous god called a Monstrum that is imprisoned inside her body and fills her with an otherworldly hunger for human flesh. In her current possession are two clues to her past: a photograph, and a fragment of a mask that many would kill to possess.



MONSTRUM A mysterious, primordial being of tremendous power that shares Maika's body and mind, and fights her for control. Once considered a god, and drawn into this world by the Shaman-Empress, this Monstrum is driven by a deadly hunger, consuming the lives of humans and Arcanics alike, leaving only their desiccated corpses behind. Though it may give the impression that its only wish is to survive, there's far more to this creature, and its desires, than meets the eye...



REN An enigmatic nekromancer cat with mysterious motives, he is one of Maika's companions on her journey, and perhaps an agent of the Dusk Court — or some greater power.



KIPPA An Arcanic fox girl saved from slavery by Maika. Innocent and optimistic, she is frightened by the Monstrum — but trusts Maika and will bravely defend her and others by rushing into battles too dangerous for a child.



MORIKO Maika's mother, an Arcanic, whose obsession with uncovering the secrets of the greatest Arcanic ancestor, the Shaman-Empress, led to her betrayal and murder. Her reputation as a woman of single-minded drive and intellectual brilliance has only grown since her death.





HAJIN.

THE
OTHERS
SEEK
YOU.

I COULD NOT
STAY. I WAS
DISHEARTENED
BY THE
ARGUMENTS.



I FEAR A
GREAT
CHANGE IS
UPON US.

YES. ONE
OF YOUR
DESIGN.

NO.
SOMETHING
DARKER. THE
DESTRUCTION
OF US, MY
FRIEND.

A WAR
BETWEEN
OUR KIND.



IT WILL
NOT
COME TO
THAT.

EEEEHHH

POOR
CREATURE.

THIS IS
WHY WE
CANNOT
STAY
HERE.

WE WILL KILL
ALL LIFE ON
THIS WORLD.
EVEN IF WE DO
NOT MEAN TO
DO SO.

WHERE WILL
WE GO? BACK
INTO THE SHADOW
PLAINS? NOTHING
IS THERE FOR
US, HAJIN.

WE WERE LOST
FOR EONS AND NOW
WE ARE NOT. THIS
WORLD IS LOVELINESS
BEYOND ANYTHING WE
EVER DREAMED. YOU
CANNOT ASK US TO
ABANDON IT.

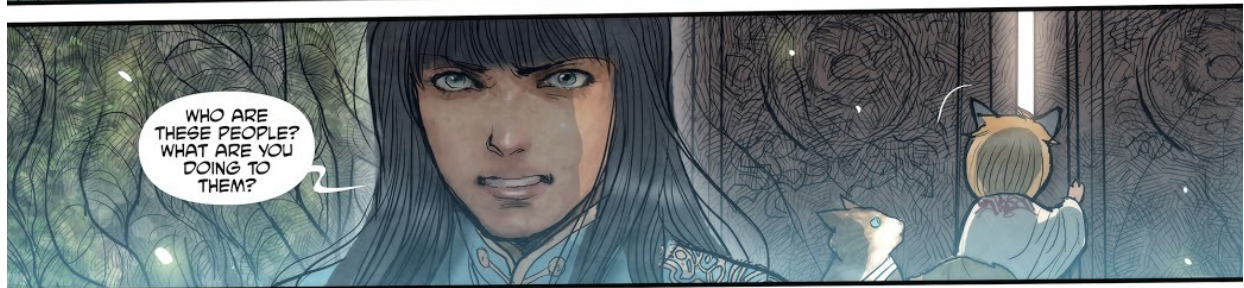
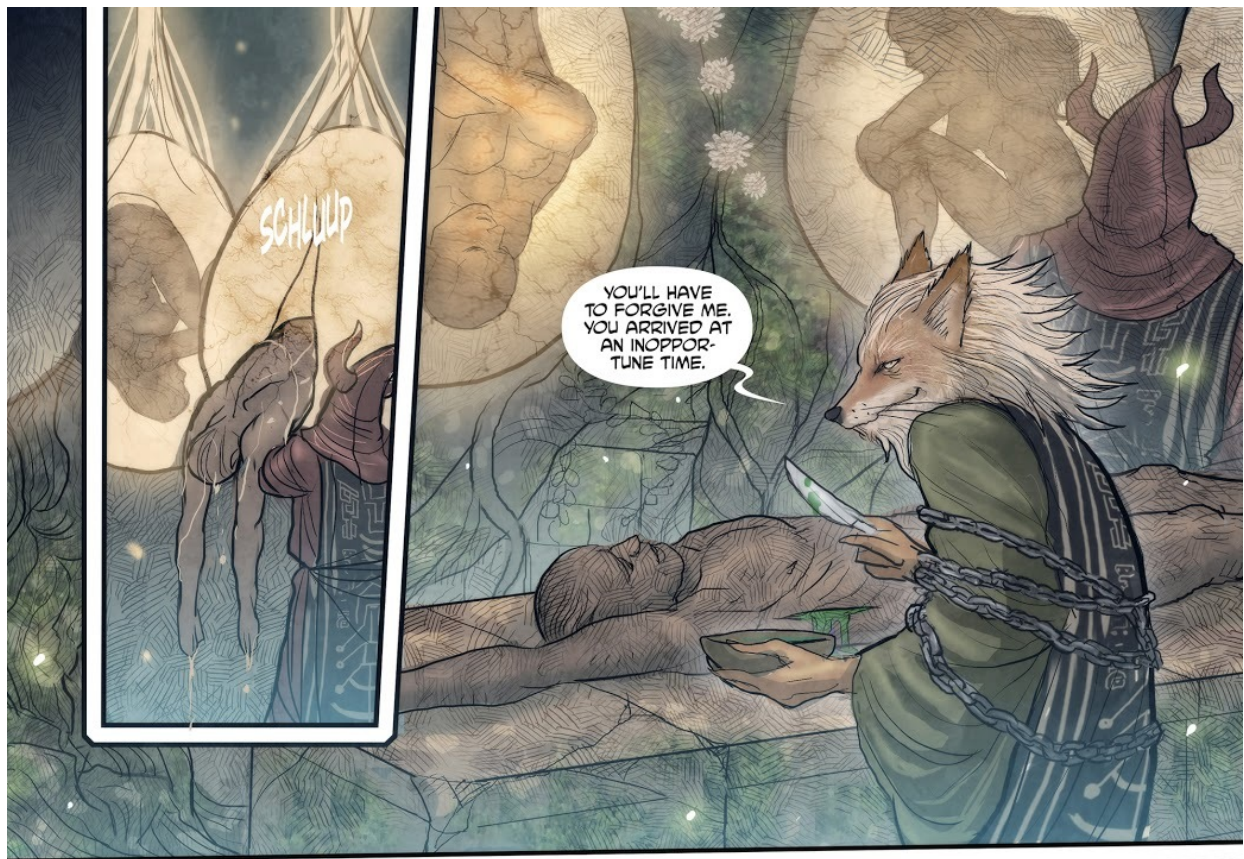
WE WERE
EXILED -- THROWN
INTO THE SHADOW
PLAINS -- BECAUSE
WE WOULD NOT
BECOME
MURDERERS.

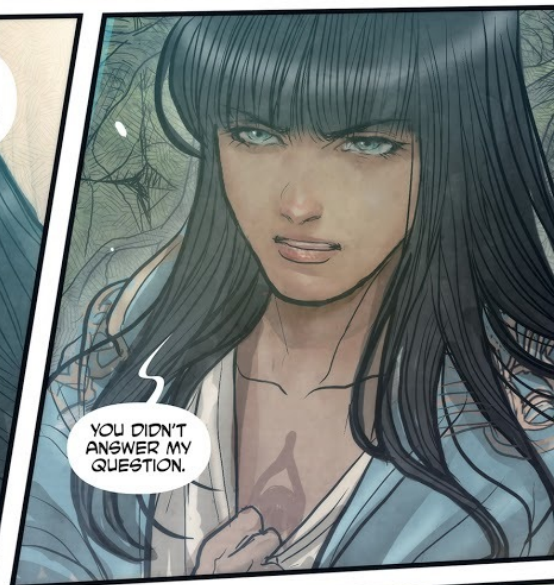
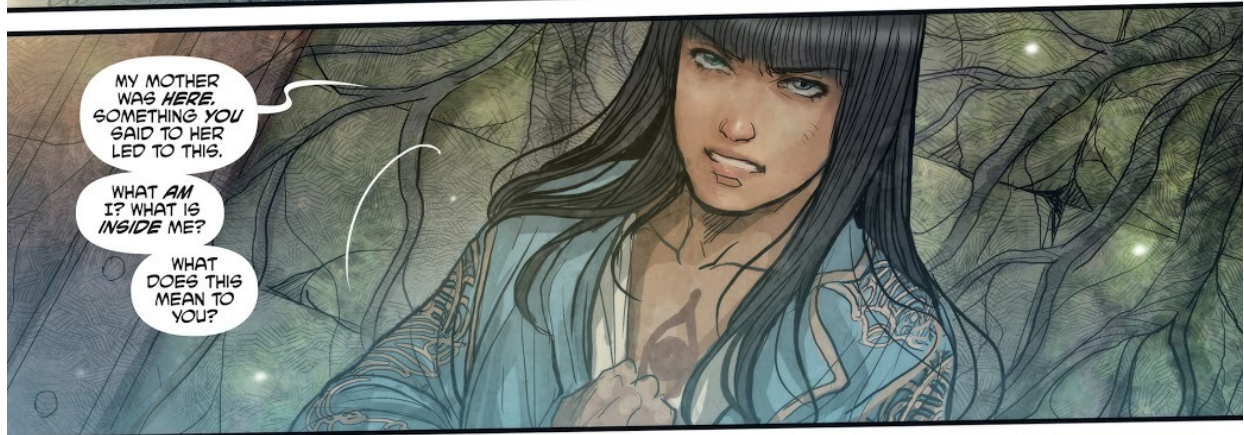
I WILL NOT
HAVE US DESTROY
OUR PRINCIPLES NOW,
AFTER ALL OUR
SACRIFICES, OUT OF
GREED OR
COWARDICE.

THE CREATURES
WHO INHABIT THIS
WORLD ARE
INSIGNIFICANT,
UNWORTHY OF OUR
BENEFACTANCE.

...THAT
IS WHAT I
TOLD...
HAJIN...

...I
WAS...A
FOOL...







BEFORE YOU MAKE ANY DEALS, HALFWOLF, IT'S IMPORTANT TO ASCERTAIN EXACTLY WHO WE'RE DEALING WITH.

EXALTED ONE, ARE YOU LORD ROHAR THE INSATIABLE... KNOWN DEMOTICALLY AS... THE BLOOD FOX?



AM I? NO ONE HAS CALLED ME THAT IN A THOUSAND YEARS... AND I HAVE BEEN TRAPPED IN THIS CURSED PRISON TWICE THAT LONG.

A PRISON, IS IT? MORE LIKE A HELL.

THERE IS A PRICE FOR AUDACITY.

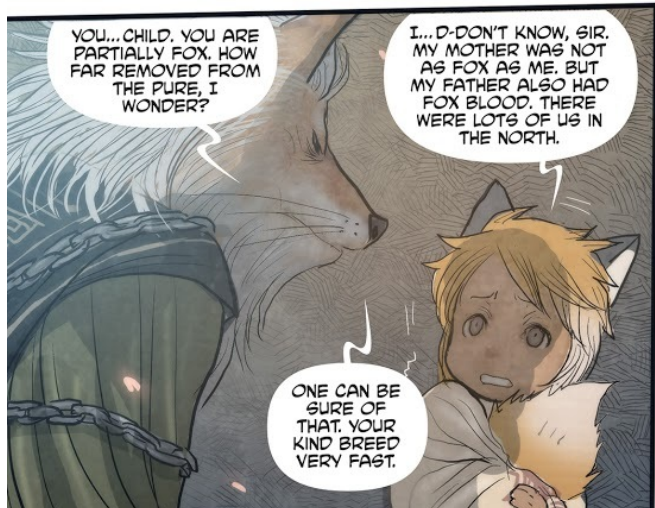
SAVE... MY... CHILD...



WHAT THE CAT WOULD INFORM YOU, WERE I NOT HERE TO CHECK HIS TONGUE, IS THAT IN MANY EPOCHS PAST I LED A POGROM AGAINST YOUR HALF-BREED ANCESTORS...

FOR REASONS WE COULD NOT EXPLAIN, WHEN YOUR KIND FIRST APPEARED OUR POWER BEGAN TO DECLINE... IT SEEMED YOU HALFBREEDS WERE DRAINING OUR MAGIC.

I TRIED TO REVERSE OUR LOSSES BY KILLING YOU ALL. I NEARLY SUCCEEDED.



YOU... CHILD. YOU ARE PARTIALLY FOX. HOW FAR REMOVED FROM THE PURE, I WONDER?

I... D-DON'T KNOW, SIR. MY MOTHER WAS NOT AS FOX AS ME. BUT MY FATHER ALSO HAD FOX BLOOD. THERE WERE LOTS OF US IN THE NORTH.

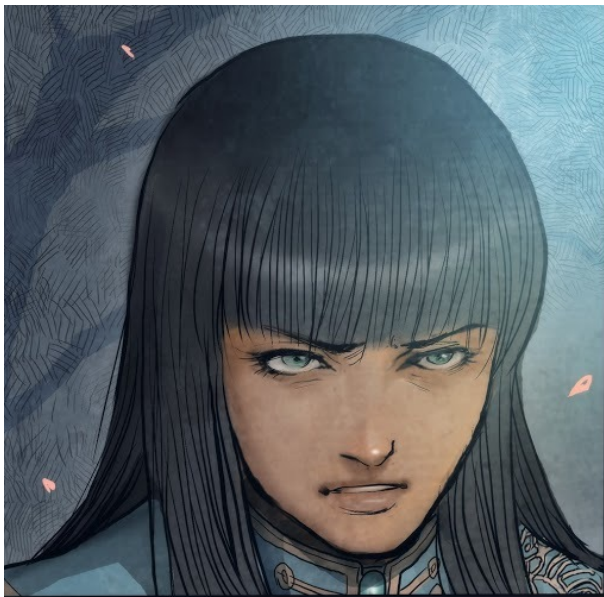
ONE CAN BE SURE OF THAT. YOUR KIND BREED VERY FAST.

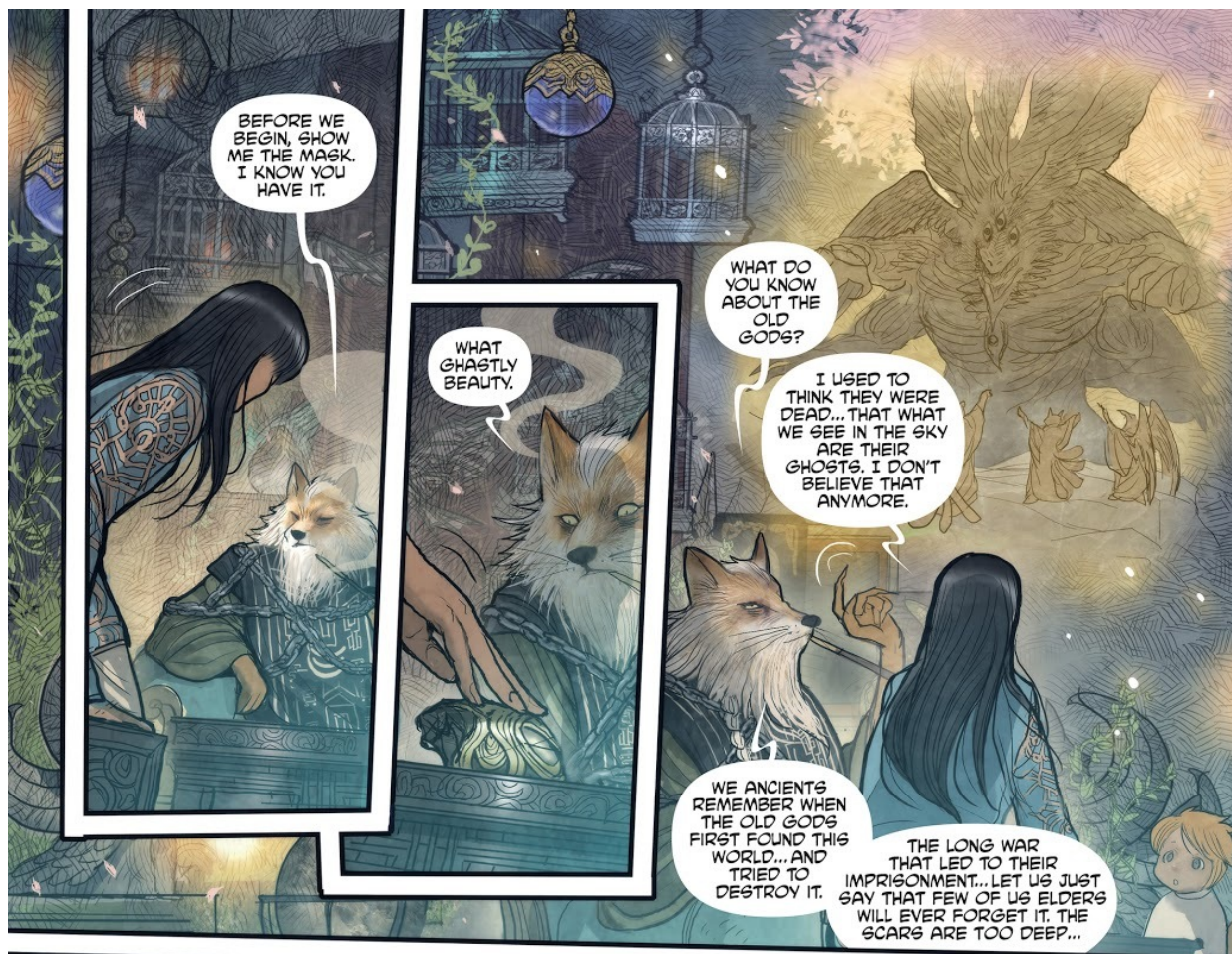


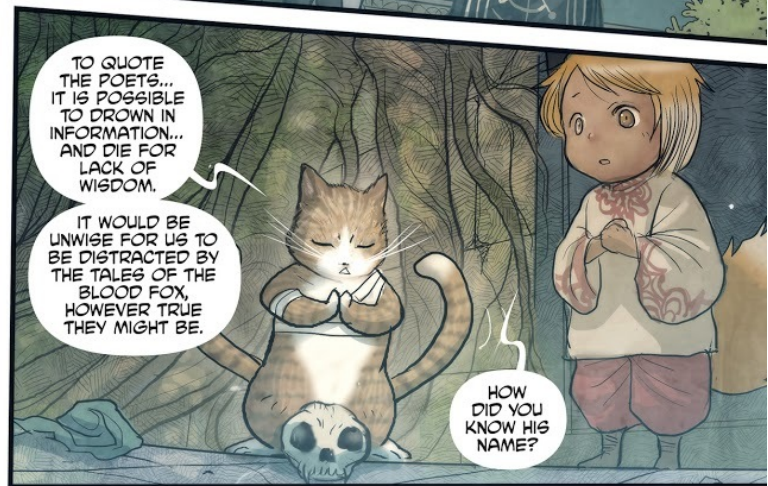
ONCE, YOUR VERY APPEARANCE WOULD HAVE SPELLED YOUR DEATH, CHILD OR NOT.

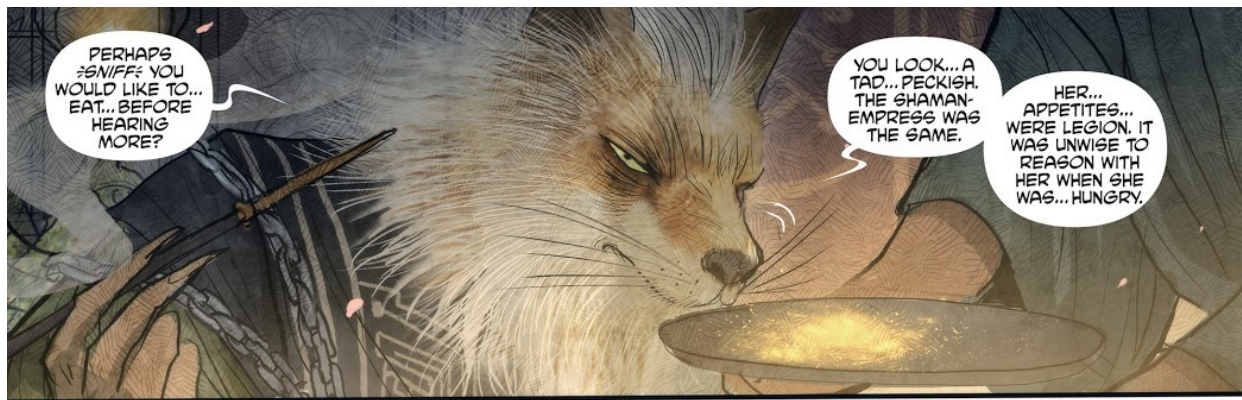
BUT I HAVE LEFT THAT HATE BEHIND. THE BLOOD FOX IS NO MORE.











PERHAPS
SNIFF YOU
WOULD LIKE TO...
EAT... BEFORE
HEARING
MORE?

YOU LOOK... A
TAD... PECKISH.
THE SHAMAN-
EMPRESS WAS
THE SAME.

HER...
APPETITES...
WERE LEGION. IT
WAS UNWISE TO
REASON WITH
HER WHEN SHE
WAS... HUNGRY.



I'M
FINE.



HEH.



BEFORE THE
SHAMAN-EMPRESS
DIED, SHE BROKE THE
MASK AND HID IT FROM
THE WORLD... FOR AT
LAST SHE CAME TO
REALIZE THE PERIL OF
HER CREATION.

HER HEIRS,
HOWEVER, SHE
COULD NOT HIDE.
AND AS FATE WOULD
HAVE IT THE
MONSTER DID NOT
DIE WITH THE
SHAMAN-EMPRESS,
BUT PASSED INTO
THE BLOOD OF HER
CHILDREN.



THE YEARS AFTER HER DEATH
WERE NOT A PROUD TIME FOR US.
BATTLES WERE FOUGHT OVER HER
BLOODLINE. ALL WHO SHOWED THE
MARK OF THE EYE WERE
IMPRISONED... EXPERIMENTED
ON... BRED...

...BUT NO
MATTER WHAT
CRUELITIES WERE
INFLECTED OR
WHAT SCIENCES
WERE BROUGHT
TO BEAR,
NOTHING
AWAKENED.

WE WERE
FOOLS TO THINK IT
WISE TO STIR THE
MONSTER... BUT THE
ALLURE OF POWER
IS BLINDING.

TO THINK...
ALL WE HAD
TO DO WAS
WAIT FOR
YOU.

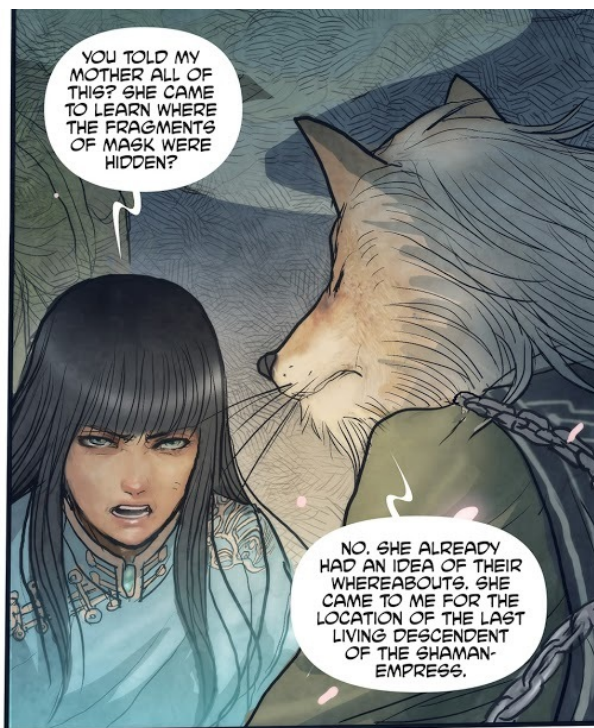




THANKS FOR THE HISTORY LESSON, GRAYBEARD, BUT HOW DOES ANY OF THIS FUCKING HELP ME?

YOU, MAIKA HALF-WOLF, ARE A DIRECT DESCENDENT OF THE SHAMAN-EMPRESS.

IF YOU CANNOT PUT THE MASK TOGETHER, AND USE IT TO CONTROL THE GOD THAT HUNGERS WITHIN YOU... YOU WILL DIE.

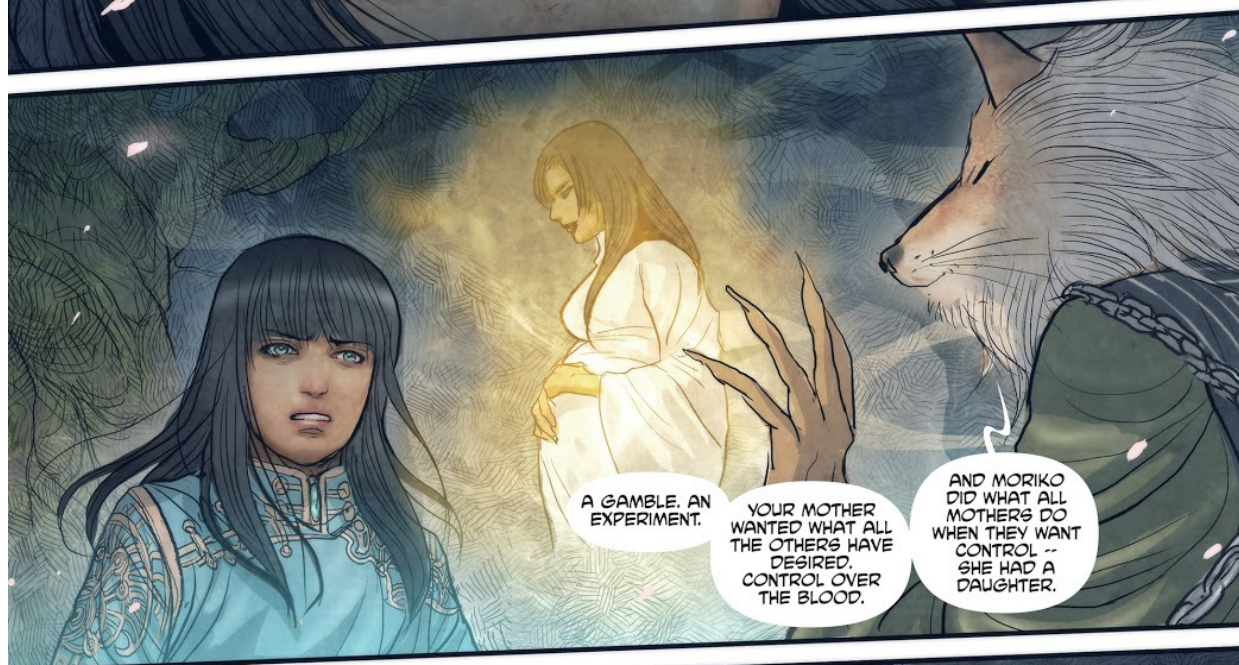


YOU TOLD MY MOTHER ALL OF THIS? SHE CAME TO LEARN WHERE THE FRAGMENTS OF MASK WERE HIDDEN?

NO. SHE ALREADY HAD AN IDEA OF THEIR WHEREABOUTS. SHE CAME TO ME FOR THE LOCATION OF THE LAST LIVING DESCENDENT OF THE SHAMAN-EMPRESS.



THEN I... I WAS JUST...



A GAMBLE. AN EXPERIMENT.

YOUR MOTHER WANTED WHAT ALL THE OTHERS HAVE DESIRED. CONTROL OVER THE BLOOD.

AND MORIKO DID WHAT ALL MOTHERS DO WHEN THEY WANT CONTROL -- SHE HAD A DAUGHTER.



I DON'T WANT THIS POWER.

WHAT I WANT, FOX, IS FOR YOU TO TELL ME HOW TO GET RID OF IT.



THERE'S NO
POWER LEFT IN THE
WORLD THAT COULD
DO WHAT YOU ASK,
SAVE THE MASK.
ASSEMBLE IT, THEN
PERHAPS...

...BUT THAT
FUTURE IS DARK
TO ME. I DO NOT
SEE ITS
POSSIBILITY.

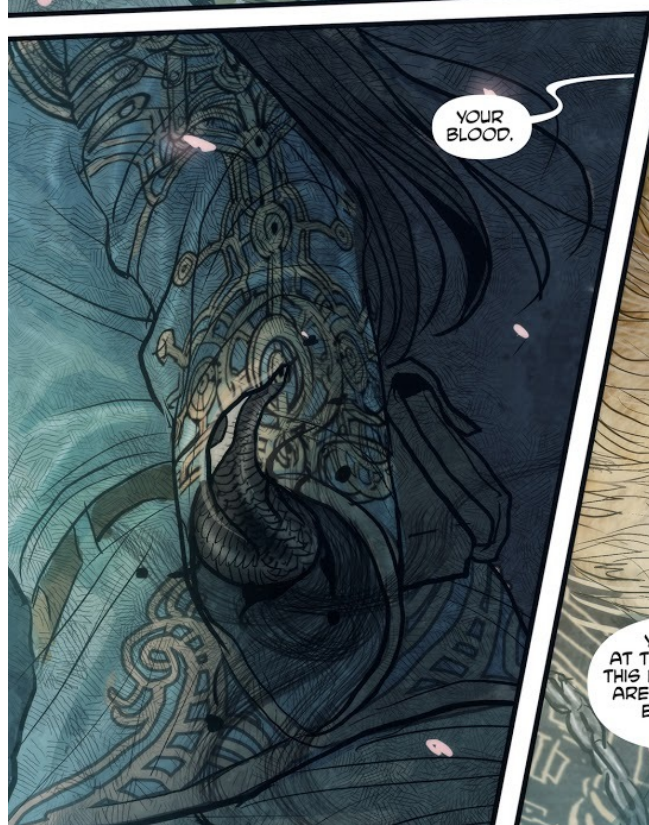
I'LL
TAKE EVEN
THE SMALLEST
CHANCE. I
DON'T WANT
TO BE A
MONSTER.



BEFORE HER DEATH
THE SHAMAN-EMPRESS
PROPHEZIZED THAT AT
THE END OF TIME HER
BLOOD WOULD RISE
AGAIN.



SHE SPOKE OF A
FINAL WAR -- MORE
TERRIBLE THAN ANY
THIS WORLD HAD EVER
SEEN -- AND THAT IT
WOULD BE HER BLOOD
THAT WOULD DECIDE
THE FATE OF ALL
OUR RACES.



YOUR
BLOOD.



YOU STAND
AT THE CENTER OF
THIS PROPHECY. YOU
ARE THE SHAMAN-
EMPRESS'S
DOOM...

...BUT YOU DON'T
DESERVE THAT POWER.
NO MORE THAN SHE DID.
THE FATE OF MY GREAT
RACE SHOULD NOT BE
IN THE HANDS OF THE
DEFILED, OF
MONGRELS.



IT IS TIME
FOR YOU TO
BREAK MY
CHAINS.

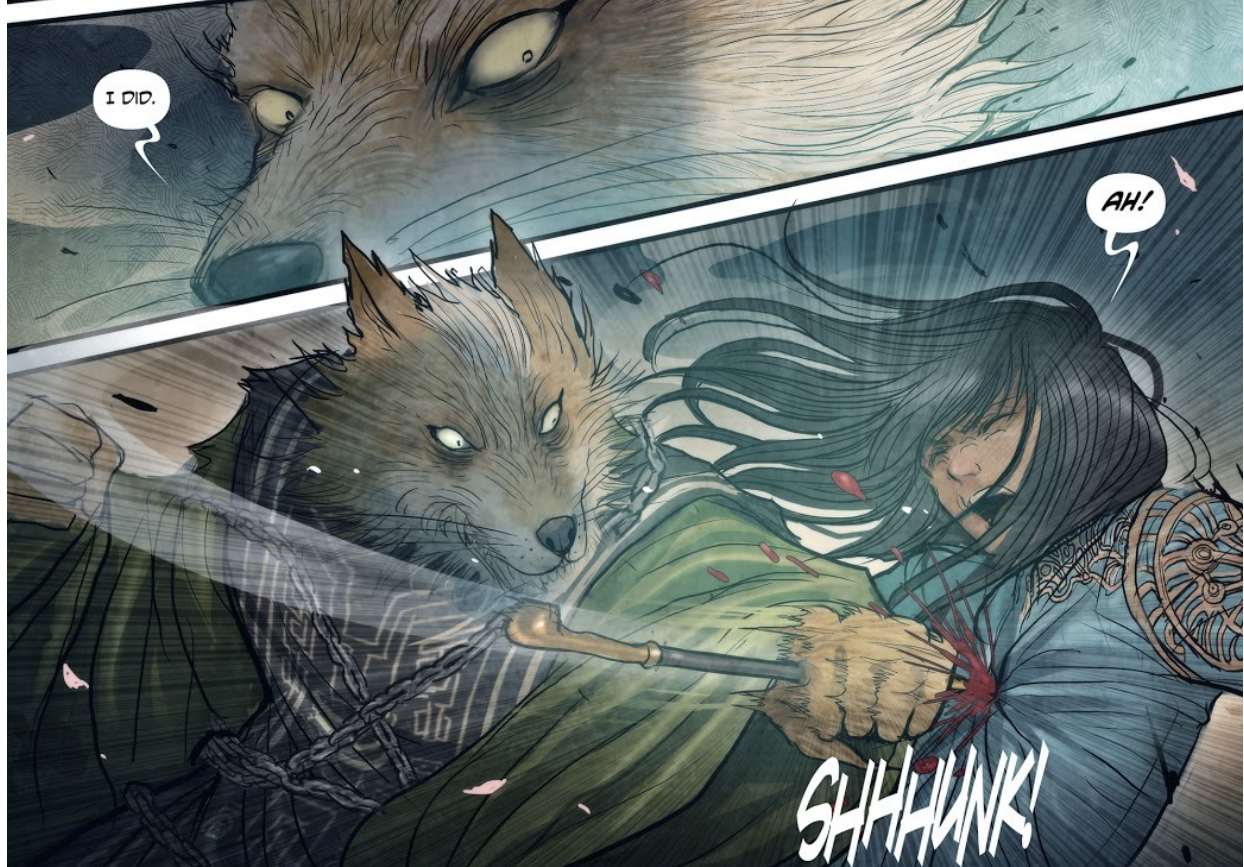
YOU
SWORE AN
OATH.

THAT'S
ALL YOU HAVE?
YOU'VE GIVEN ME
NOTHING I CAN
USE!



YOU KILLED HOW
MANY OF MY KIND IN
YOUR DAY? I'M
GUESSING YOU'D BE
HAPPY TO KILL SOME
MORE.

I'M NOT BREAKING
SHIT. IF YOU CAN SEE
THE FUCKING
FUTURE, YOU SHOULD
HAVE SEEN THIS
COMING.

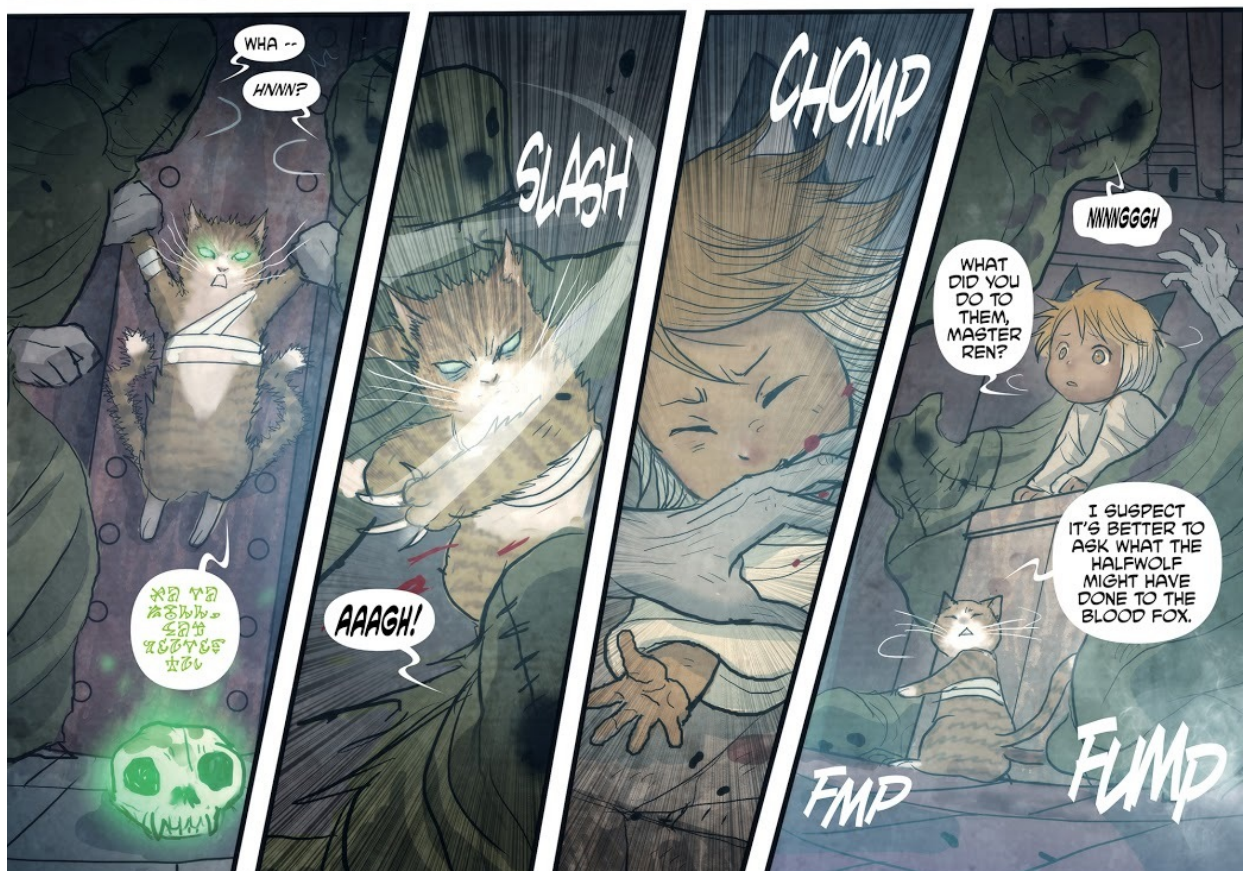


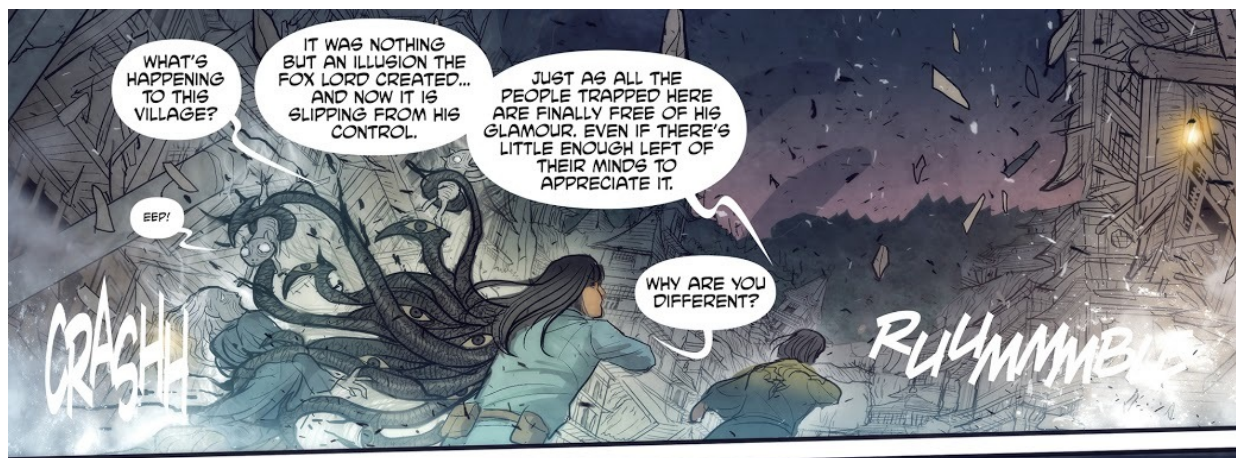
I DID.

AH!

SHHHUNK!







WHAT'S
HAPPENING
TO THIS
VILLAGE?

IT WAS NOTHING
BUT AN ILLUSION THE
FOX LORD CREATED...
AND NOW IT IS
SLIPPING FROM HIS
CONTROL.

JUST AS ALL THE
PEOPLE TRAPPED HERE
ARE FINALLY FREE OF HIS
GLAMOUR, EVEN IF THERE'S
LITTLE ENOUGH LEFT OF
THEIR MINDS TO
APPRECIATE IT.

EEP!

WHY ARE YOU
DIFFERENT?



I WAS STRANDED HERE
SEVEN YEARS AGO DURING A
RECONNAISSANCE. THE FOX
HAD NEVER MET A CUMAEEA.
MY... SLIGHT RESISTANCE...
TO HIS GLAMOUR
INTRIGUED HIM.

SO I
LIVED.

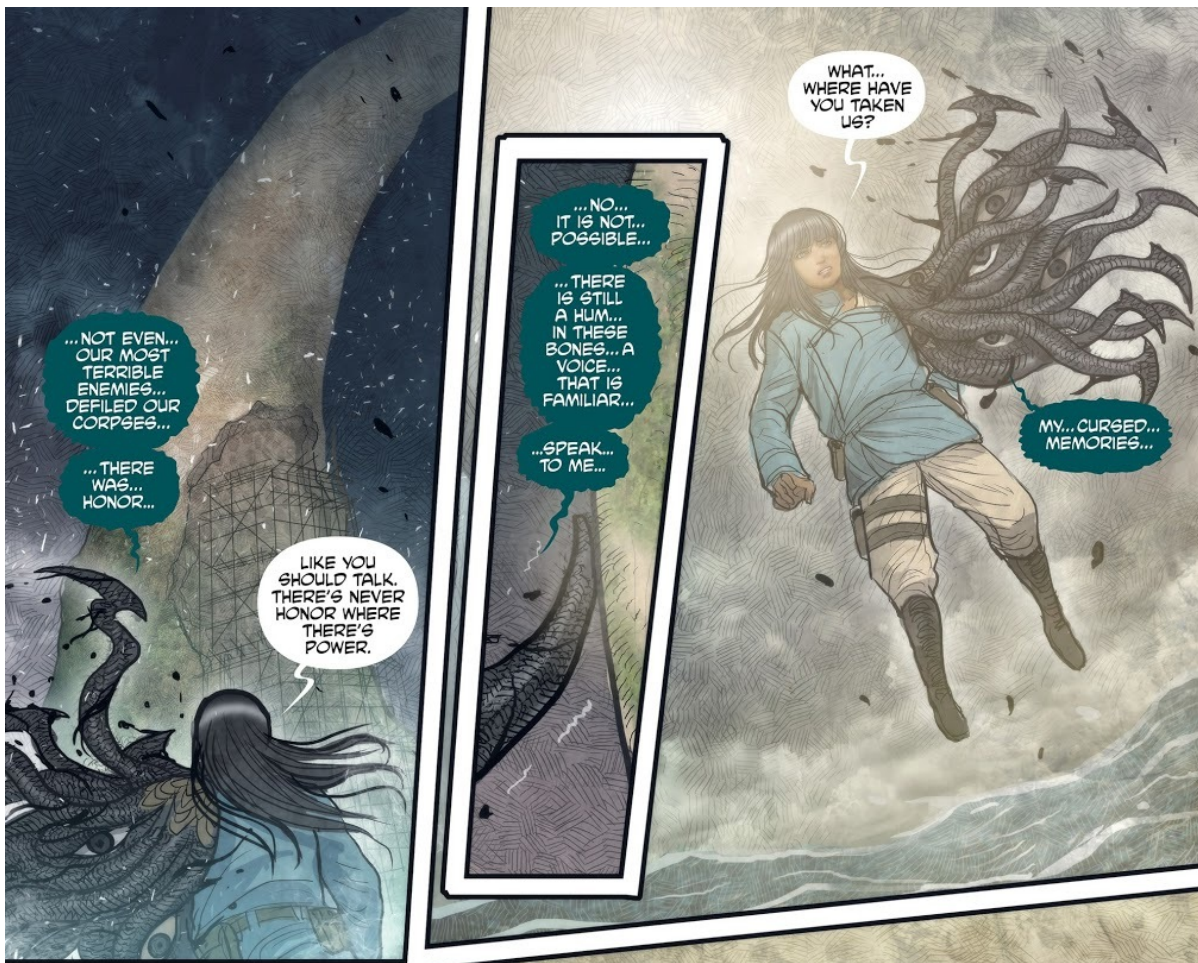
TELL ME,
DEMON
CHILD... WHO
WON THE
WAR?



WE DESTROYED
EVERY LAST ONE OF YOU
FUCKING WITCHES. ARCANICS
OCCUPY THE FEDERATION OF
MAN AND EVERY HUMAN WHO
WORE THE UNIFORM NOW
LIVES IN THE SAME SLAVE
CAMPS YOU KEPT US IN
DURING THE WAR.

AH, I KNEW IT
WAS NEVER
GOING TO END
WELL.

HURRY, THE
BEACH IS
JUST BEYOND
THE MINE.



The background of the entire page is a dark, textured surface, possibly a cave wall or a large creature's hide, covered with numerous eyes of various sizes. In the upper right, a large, bright explosion or fireball is depicted with the sound effect 'BOOOOM!' written in a stylized, white, cursive font. In the lower left, a large, white, stylized sound effect 'SHHLIK!' is written. The overall tone is dark and ominous.

... YOU
HAVE NO
CHOICE...

... I HAVE
ALREADY BEGUN
TO OPEN THE
GATE... AND I
WILL NOT LET YOU
STOP ME...

EVEN IF IT
MEANS WE
MUST
BATTLE!

I AM THE
RUINER-PROXY, THE
DESTROYER OF
SPHERES...
AND YOU
PRESUME TO
CHALLENGE
ME?

ZINN!



...YOU...
BETRAVER... YOU...
WHO COULD NOT
TOLERATE... MERCY FOR
THOSE LESS POWERFUL
THAN YOU...

...YOU WILL
NEVER... BE
REDEEMED...



AAAAH!

... NO... NO...
THESE BONES...
BELONG TO
MY... SISTER-
BROTHER...

YOU --
KOFF --
KILLED THAT
GOD...

... NO...
WE WERE...
FRIENDS...

... HOW...
COULD...
I...

THIS IS
NO TIME
FOR SOME
BLASTED
DEMONIC
SEIZURE.

BECAUSE
YOU ARE A
MONSTER.



YOU LED THE
CHARGE THAT
WOULD HAVE
DESTROYED
MY KIND.

AND HERE
YOU ARE,
WEAK AND
ALONE.

YOU ARE
MINE NOW.
BOTH OF
YOU.

To Be Continued...



DEGRADATION

INSANITY

A
FLOWER
FROM
THE
DEMONIC
GARDEN

ONE MOMENT OF BLISS

DREAMTAR

A VICIOUS VICE CORRUPTING OUR YOUTH!

IMMORALITY

A LIFETIME OF REGRET!



An excerpt of a lecture from the esteemed **Professor Tam Tam**, former First Record-Keeper of the Is'hami Temple, and learned contemporary of Namron Black Claw...

The years immediately following the Great War were difficult ones for the Arcanic Realms. Whole families, entire bloodlines, had been wiped out, countless communities ravaged, a generation of youth enslaved by the Cumaea and the Federation of Man – or fallen in the desperate fight for freedom. Not a single Arcanic across the known lands, from Dusk to Dawn Court, could say they had not lost friends or family in the Great War.

It was a collective wound – and like many wounds, this one festered. In the aftermath of the war, Arcanics were left disillusioned, disoriented, traumatized. And into this desolation, came dreamtar.

A powerful narcotic derived from the mature blossom of the popei flower, dreamtar is viciously addictive to non-cats. Few who smoke it escape the extract's terrible grasp. In what became an all too familiar irony, many of the same Arcanics who survived the horrors of the war succumbed to the ravages of addiction.

Cats who long cultivated the popei flower for its aromatic qualities are often accused of introducing dreamtar to Arcanic populations. Never speak of the flower or carry it or its essence on your person in non-cat lands. Many a cat has been lynched for carrying as little as a petal in their pouch...





MONSTRESS MAIL, ART, CRAFTS

Dear Readers,

MONSTRESS is a labor of love, and as we near the end of our second arc we want to thank you all again for being such wonderful, supportive readers. Keep writing to us, keep sending us your fan art (and crafts) – we love seeing your creations!

Marjorie & Sana

Hi Marjorie and Sana, and the whole MONSTRESS team,

This is the first fan letter I have ever written to anyone, but I just have to praise this series. The story is great, and the art is gorgeous. I am no artist, but it is one of the most important things to me in any movie, TV series or graphic novel.

I am from Pakistan and not many people here read graphic novels. When they hear comics, they think superhero drawings. But we need more amazing Asian-themed series to bring newer generations to this medium. Keep up the good work.

Your newest and hopefully loyal fan from now on,
Ehtisham U.
Islamabad, Punjab, Pakistan

MARJORIE: Thank you so much, Ehtisham! We appreciate that tremendously.

Miss Liu, Miss Takeda, and the entire MONSTRESS team,

I love your work! Your world is full of lore and history that is brutal and alluring. The artwork is beautiful and lush. Sorry to gush, but it's refreshing to see a comic that brings something new to the table. (Main characters of color; powerful women; consistent lore.)

I hope MONSTRESS lasts for years to come, and that there may be bomb merchandise in the future!

Junior T.

MARJORIE: Junior, thank you! And don't worry, there just might be some fun MONSTRESS swag in the very near future...

Let me say this from the bottom of my heart – thank you for this amazing comic. I was

already sold when I knew it would be a fantasy steampunk story set in Asia with a female protagonist, but it turned out to be a bit different from what I expected, and everything I wanted. I love the richness of the setting, the ambiguity of almost every character (Kippa is a shining beacon of light, so I had to add that "almost") and the denseness of the plot. Sana's art is breathtaking and, if I could, I would hang MONSTRESS cover art on every inch of my walls.

I could seriously compliment you on every part of MONSTRESS, but that would take too long. So I'll focus on particulars. My favourite thing about the worldbuilding is probably Marium's story. I didn't connect the dots the first time I read the name – but then came that lecture from Professor Tam Tam in issue #6. I think the idea of making Mary the central figure in a fantasy alternate world religion is just genius, and I love everything about it. And how she and the Shaman-Empress can be read as parallels. I wonder though – I feel the map at the end of the trade paperback has to correspond at least partially to "our" maps, but I can't figure out how to read it. Is Africa part of the known world in MONSTRESS?

I wouldn't have said it before issue #7, but you've done a truly horrible thing and made me fall in love with the Sword of the East. She didn't really grab my attention in the first arc in the one issue she appeared – but then came issue #7. And her reaction to finding out about Maika's existence, and that heartbreaking face when she lifted the mask.

She falls right into my favourite fictional character type – a dark-haired fighter doing morally ambiguous things, probably troubled and with a softer side. I don't know her name and she appears sparsely and briefly (and that's that horrible part) – but she is amazing, and I love her. So of course she's in every MONSTRESS fan art I've ever drawn. I've imagined her a bit younger on the coloured one I'm sending you, fighting the Cumaea during the war. I can't wait to see the warlord in her – and I'm on the edge of my seat thinking about the aunt/niece meeting with Maika.

I hope that creating MONSTRESS is as satisfying as reading it. The whole team is making something truly great and I for one am dying to see where the story leads. Just wanted to let you know that there's a girl in Poland anxiously waiting for every issue and grinning at the thought of MONSTRESS.

Orsula





Send letters & fan art to: monstress.comic@gmail.com!
#Monstress on Twitter and Instagram!



Art by Orsula

MARJORIE: Orsula...thank you very much for your kind words. I will confess: the Warlord is also one of my favorite characters, and you'll be seeing much more of her in the future. Also, we love your version of her! As for the shape of the known world, stick around -- more answers will be revealed soon.



Art by Trinidad Escobar
www.trinidadescobar.com

MARJORIE: What an amazing Yvette!

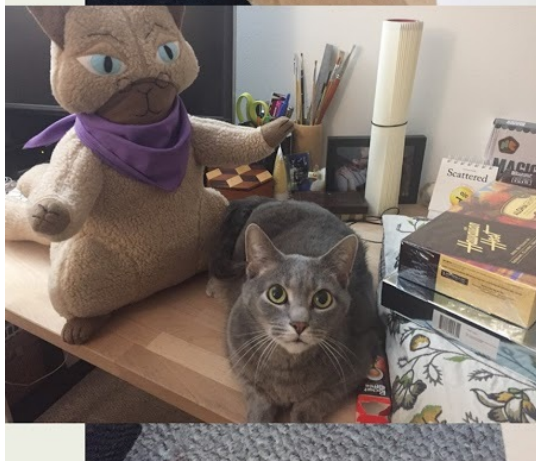
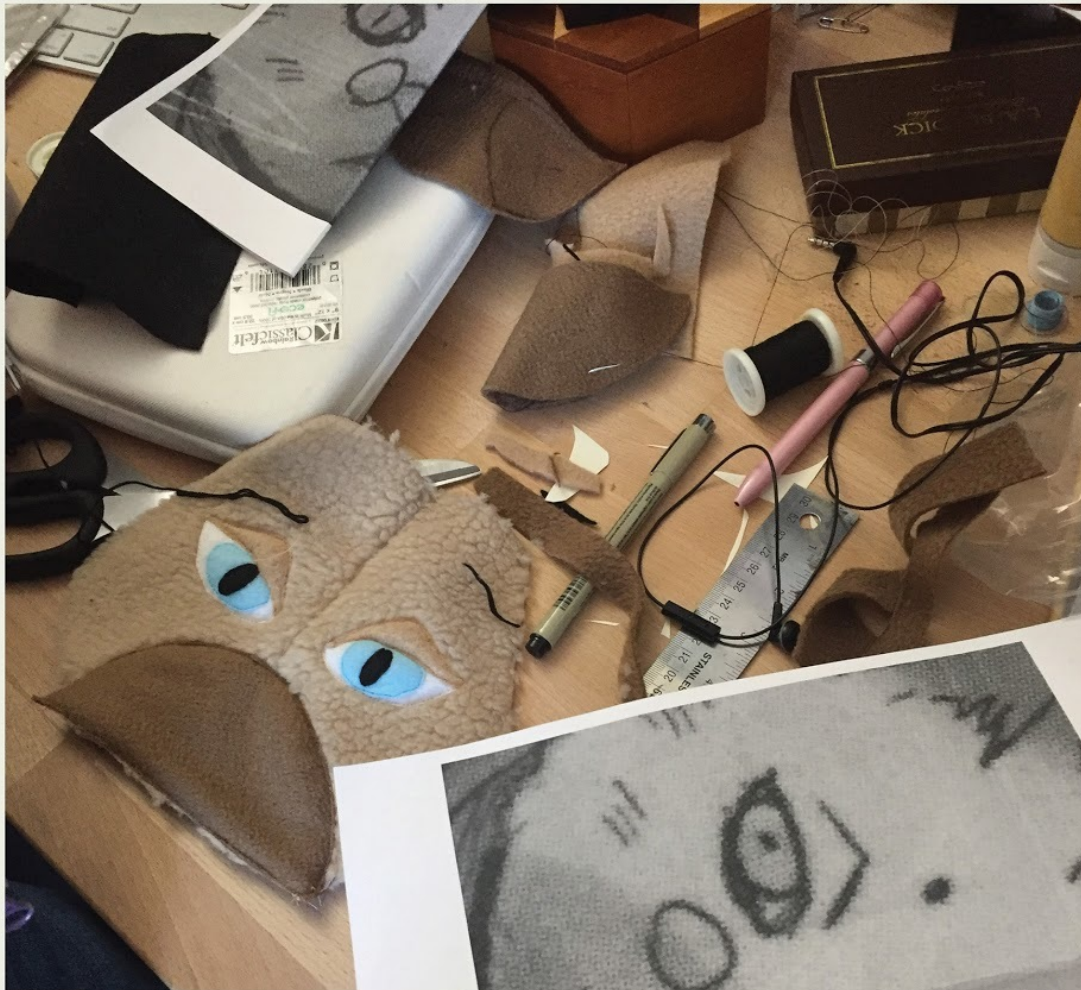
Finally, **MONSTRESS** readers continue to blow us away with all the amazing objects they've been inspired to craft. Y'all are super talented. Anna, for example, created her very own Professor Tam Tam plushie (which had us all screaming with delight) and was kind enough to send us a breakdown of her process. Turn the page for more...



Art by Orsula



MONSTRESS MAIL, ART, CRAFTS



I started by sketching out a pattern based on Professor Tam Tam's appearances in Volume 1, and made a small prototype just to see what it would look like fully assembled. Figuring out how to arrange the four tails took a bit of work — I tested out a couple different variants with fabric scraps before I came up with a solution I was happy with (the trick was to arrange them like furry flower petals).



Send letters & fan art to: monstress.comic@gmail.com!
#Monstress on Twitter and Instagram!



After making some modifications to the neck, legs, and feet, I had my final 35-piece pattern. I cut out all the pieces and got to work attaching them together inside-out. The fabric had a maroon backing, so it looked pretty creepy right until the very end!



As I was completing the head, I assembled the eyes out of pieces of felt and attached them to her face, trying to keep the proportions right. After turning her right-side out, the next step was to stuff her with some fiber fill and add the finishing touches! I embroidered the last few details onto her face, like her spectacles (wouldn't want her to lose them) and gave her her signature neckerchief to complete her professorial look.

- Anna



NEXT ISSUE

MARJORIE LIU

SANA TAKEDA

MONSTRESS™



\$3.99
ISSUE 12



#monstress

MONSTRESS™ ISSUE 11

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MONSTRESS



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RATED M / MATURE

SPECIAL DELIVERY

The image is a promotional graphic for a comic book. It features a red and black halftone background. At the top, the words 'SPECIAL DELIVERY' are written in a large, bold, white serif font with a blue outline. Below the title is a large, stylized illustration. On the left, a character with a black mask and a red suit is shown in a dynamic pose. In the center, there is a large, stylized letter 'E' that is part of a logo. To the right of the 'E', there is a large, textured, red object that looks like a piece of fabric or a bag. The overall style is reminiscent of classic comic book art.

D'ARGH-EMPIRE

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